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New York

President:	Mr. Van Bohemen	(New Zealand)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Al Hussein, who is joining today's meeting via video teleconference from Geneva.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to warmly welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson.

The Deputy Secretary-General: One of the greatest missions of the United Nations is the prevention of genocide. The horrors of the past and the dangers of the present remind us of the importance of that mission. The genocide at Srebrenica was one of the darkest chapters in recent history. In three days, family and community members, faith leaders, dignitaries and representatives from around the world will gather in Srebrenica to honour the victims. I will travel there to represent the United Nations on behalf of the Secretary-General.

Today, we meet here in New York to pay our respects to all victims and to share in the grief of the affected families and communities. We gather in humility and regret to recognize the failure of the United Nations and the international community to prevent such tragedies. But we also meet to proclaim our determination that the lessons learned from those unspeakable days in July 1995 must help us detect the dangers earlier. We must build an Organization that is better equipped to keep such crimes and atrocities from reoccurring.

The United Nations has acknowledged its responsibility for failing to protect the people who sought shelter and relief in Srebrenica. The 15 November 1999 Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on the fall of Srebrenica (A/54/549) identified the mistakes committed by the Organization and by the wider international community. That same year, the independent inquiry into the actions of the United Nations during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda found similar deficiencies. We have since then worked in many ways to implement the recommendations of the reports. Prevention has become an imperative. A Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide has been appointed. International criminal tribunals have brought perpetrators of heinous crimes to justice. The 2005 General Assembly endorsement of the responsibility to protect made the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity a core State and international responsibility.

Peacekeepers are now regularly provided with robust mandates to protect civilians. They are often authorized to use all necessary means in defence of populations. But peacekeepers continue to face many of the same challenges that plagued the United Nations in Srebrenica, not least paralysing divisions among Member States and a lack of political and material support. The Human Rights Up Front initiative is generating structural changes inside the Organization, which aim to improve our efforts to take early preventive action. The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect have developed a framework of analysis for atrocity crimes, a useful tool to assess risks and develop prevention strategies. The United Nations and its Member States and regional organizations have an obligation to strengthen our collective prevention efforts and to find peaceful solutions in the spirit of Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Security Council has a central role to play. We see today how situations can deteriorate and get out of control when the Council is divided. The carnage in Syria has undoubtedly taken a toll on the reputation and standing of the Council and the United Nations. Atrocious crimes are today also taking place in Iraq, South Sudan and elsewhere. Extremist groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab are seemingly competing in brutality with the aim of spreading fear and division among populations. As the Charter and as morality direct us, we must unite our strength against such atrocious acts and threats. When we are running out of words in our outrage, we have to take action and live up to basic values and principles.

All of us share the same objective — to work towards a world that has finally learned the horrific lessons of the past and where people can live in peace

and dignity, as is their right and aspiration. The world looks to us at the United Nations and to the Security Council and expects us to uphold that right and to meet those aspirations. That is our shared responsibility today. And it is how we can best pay homage to the victims of Srebrenica.

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Al Hussein.

Mr. Al Hussein: The sounds of mass murder and war are not the howling of machine guns or popping of side arms. The real sounds of an act of genocide, the sounds of Srebrenica that I heard years ago were the dull, low moaning of 10,000 and more living victims of genocide — all the mothers, sisters and daughters of the murdered 8,000 boys and men. How could we, all of us, in the United Nations at the time have been so foolish as not to anticipate their murder? How could we have made so many mistakes? Still today we have not properly understood them, nor have we even taken the right corrective measures to avoid their repetition.

One week ago, The Hague Institute for Global Justice and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum organized a discussion that brought together, for the first time, many of the key officials connected to the events 20 years ago in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially Srebrenica. Our task was to piece together in detail what happened from the formation of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 to the fall of Srebrenica and the mass murder that ensued, with the help of recently declassified documents, as well as materials from the relevant trials at the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Allow me to briefly narrate some of the key events.

Early in 1993, the Bosnian Deputy Prime Minister Hakija Turajlić was shot and killed by Bosnian Serb soldiers at a checkpoint outside Sarajevo, while riding in a United Nations armoured personnel carrier. The United Nations watched the killing haplessly. In one sudden bloody stroke, it lost the respect of both sides to the conflict. When General Morillon placed Srebrenica under the protection of the United Nations two months later, it restored some credibility to the Force, but it also showed UNPROFOR to be operating in its own orbit, unguided by New York. Resolution 836 (1993) subsequently gave UNPROFOR that guidance, and some leverage too, by providing a stick — that is, the authority to take the necessary measures, including use of force, such as NATO air power, in reply to bombardments against the six safe areas. That stick was used successfully in February 1994 when the United Nations used the threat of NATO air power to oblige the Serbs to cease their pounding of Sarajevo.

Yet that stick was then dropped by UNPROFOR during the Goražde crisis in April 1994, when the Secretary-General, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the UNPROFOR Commander in Bosnia and Herzegovina, General Sir Hugh Michael Rose, were not eager to use the threat of force and settled only for close air support, a limited action solely in defence of the United Nations. They were concerned by the apparent contradiction of having Blue Helmet troops take sides in a conflict, yet by not taking sides when the conflict was so obviously one-sided, with an aggressor and a clear victim, the United Nations appeared to many to be doing just that — siding with the aggressor.

The hesitation of the United Nations to use NATO air power meant the Bosnian Serb leadership could push on an open door. Whenever, in 1994, UNPROFOR came under attack in one of the six designated safe areas and requested closer support from NATO, leading to what was described as "pinprick attacks", the Bosnian Serb leadership took United Nations personnel hostage. This caused even more vacillation in the United Nations, prompting the Bosnian Serb leadership to exert even greater levels of pressure. The United Nations simply became reactive, especially after the collapse of the Vance-Owen plan in 1993.

Only on 24 and 25 May 1995 did this change. Following the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the United Nations weapons collection sites around Sarajevo, a new UNPROFOR Commander, more disposed to the use of air power, warned both sides to return their weapons. The Bosnian Serbs were slow to comply and air strikes, as opposed to close air support, were ordered. The next day, the Bosnian Serbs bombed Tuzla, leading to a second set of NATO air strikes on Bosnian Serb targets. This prompted, in turn, the taking of some 400 United Nations peacekeepers hostage. Soon after, the United States, together with the United Kingdom and France, decided to suspend the use of air strikes. The stage was set for Srebrenica.

Earlier, on 8 March, Radovan Karadžić had approved his Directive 7, ordering the Bosnian Serb Army to squeeze the eastern enclaves, including

Srebrenica, to "create an unbearable situation... with no hope of survival or life for the inhabitants of Srebrenica and Zepa". Together with this pause in the use of air strikes coming into being in the first days of June, a door clicked open and the hand of Ratko Mladić swung towards it.

On 3 June, the Bosnian Serbs attacked Observation Post Echo on the edge of the Srebrenica safe area, found little resistance and took over the post. It was the litmus test for what was to come. The following day, 4 June, Ratko Mladić met with the overall United Nations Commander, Lieutenant General Bernard Janvier, and came away with the impression that the United Nations would not use NATO air power so long as the Bosnian Serbs refrained from threatening United Nations personnel.

One month later, as the Bosnian Serb army advanced on Srebrenica from the south-east, there were two requests for close air support from DutchBat, on 6 and 8 July, respectively. Both of them were denied, even though resolution 836 (1993) had been clearly violated. When Mladić saw that there was minimal resistance, he decided on 9 July to take the town. On 10 July, the Dutch set up a blocking position that, if overrun, the United Nations warned, would trigger a NATO response. But when Lieutenant General Janvier spoke to General Tolimir on the evening of 10 July to demand that the Bosnian Serb soldiers immediately halt their firing, Janvier telegraphed, in his choice of words, his reluctance to use air power.

On 11 July, NATO aircraft were flying over Srebrenica from 6 a.m., ready to pounce, but there was no request from Lieutenant General Janvier. Only after the Bosnian Serbs began to actually overrun the United Nations blocking position at 11 a.m. did Janvier present his request to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Akashi, who approved it. But there was a condition attached to the order — air power could be used only against the actual weapons system firing on the United Nations blocking position, so not only was it all too late, but also too little. The safe area was seized.

On the night of 11 July, Ratko Mladić began the process of transforming that military victory into a crime on a scale not seen in Europe since 1945. It was, apparently, on that night that he took the decision to execute the 1,000 boys and men gathered in Potocari. The mass executions began on 13 July. Realizing that they had been undetected by the United Nations, the killers continued their work until over 8,000 *hors de combat* boys and men were dead.

In the years since then, while many of us have been haunted by these events, there has never been a proper discussion about them at the United Nations, beyond one perfunctory debate in the General Assembly in 1999. The fact that UNPROFOR had a clumsy mandate in the beginning was abundantly clear, and it was obvious that two cultures, the United Nations and NATO, operated together with some confusion. Still, those boys and men may well have lived had the UNPROFOR Chief of Staff in Sarajevo actually approved the request for close air support, or had the United Nations used air strikes in line with resolution 836 (1993) on 3 June, when the attack on Observation Post Echo took place; or on 6 July, when the advance against Srebrenica began; or on 8 July; or if Lieutenant General Janvier had approved them on 10 July, or early on the morning of 11 July.

And the deeper lessons for the United Nations are as relevant today as they were 20 years ago. Our inability to anticipate events, so prevalent then, is still with us today, as is our recurrent failure to understand with whom and with what we are dealing. Even after the events earlier in the war in Ključ, Kotor Varoš, Prijedor and Sanski Most, none of us believed that Mladić could be so brazen as to commit genocide when the United Nations was there in Bosnia and Herzegovina in great numbers.

We got it wrong — so wrong — although the people of Srebrenica knew full well who they were confronted with and what was in store for them. We simply had not stopped to think about these issues in sufficient depth. Perhaps we could say the same thing about the international community's approach to the political crisis in July 2013 in Juba, given what unfolded subsequently in South Sudan. All too often in UNPROFOR, we lurched almost mindlessly from crisis to crisis, and still today the United Nations seems to skate over the surface of many of the conflicts on its agenda.

Moreover, UNPROFOR feared the Bosnian Serbs. We in UNPROFOR did not even allow for the possibility they could also have feared or learned to fear us. We were often timid, and readily communicated this impression. The most foundational lesson of Srebrenica was this — to succeed, the United Nations must be respected. For the United Nations to be effective in robust peacekeeping, all parties to a conflict, and in

particular the aggressor, must take the measure of the Council, its decisions and the United Nations presence on the ground. They must believe there will be serious consequences, and no impunity.

We also too often crossed the line from needing to understand the grievances of the oppressors to then almost showing sympathy with them. And this, to me was and is exceedingly dangerous. More alarmingly, we perceived the complexity of the political scene but then made the mistake of believing that what was complicated politically must also be complicated morally. It was not. The fact that all sides committed crimes was true, but this did not mean that all sides were equally guilty — not when scale and proportion were factored in. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the moral picture was actually very straightforward for anyone who wanted to see it.

General Rupert Smith, the single most influential United Nations Commander, who brought the fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina to an end in 1995, today argues persuasively that Commanders of United Nations operations must command, and that others must do the negotiating. If not, when they are faced with an assault on their mandate or personnel, or on civilians, the Commanders or the Special Representative of the Secretary-General will have nothing to offer in negotiations except the mission itself.

Again, so long as there is no respect for the United Nations, it is likely that further massacres will be perpetrated. At the very least, if the United Nations is to make good on its commitment to protecting civilians, it must be resolute, undivided and clear about its intention. Had that been the case with Sri Lanka in 2009 — or now in the Sudan, Syria, the Central African Republic or even Burundi and Myanmar — the consequences for the lives of millions of people would be immense.

I also believe that it is clear from the 1999 Srebrenica report that the safe area concept can work, but only if implemented properly. I believe it should be examined very thoroughly for possible application in some of today's crises, where the acute suffering of innocent people reminds us of the thousands of families weeping, hauntingly, for the men and boys of Srebrenica whom they would never see again.

Srebrenica was a catastrophe for its inhabitants and the refugees huddled there on 11 July 1995, and also for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the United Nations. It is a trauma from which we could still learn, with great remorse. For many of us who served with the United Nations in the former Yugoslavia, Srebrenica will remain for many years the heart that breaks daily.

The President: I thank Mr. Al Hussein for his briefing.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2015/508, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are gathered here today to pay tribute to the memory of all the victims of the monstrous crimes committed in and around Srebrenica two decades ago.

Before proceeding, Mr. President, I would like to ask you to call for a minute of silence to honour their memory.

The President: I note the request of the representative of the Russian Federation, who asked that we observe a minute of silence to honour the dead of Srebrenica.

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In the course of the Balkan crisis, the region witnessed a variety of atrocities, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. The Russian Federation has consistently advocated the investigation of all crimes committed during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina with respect to all ethnic groups, including Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. Do we need to ask ourselves the question of who suffered the most? If one looks at overall result of a decade of conflict the territory the former Yugoslavia — when hundreds of thousands of Serbs were driven from their traditional places of residence — it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that they suffered as much as others, if not more.

In the region and the world, we have before us a fundamentally important task, namely, to achieve full peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is why we support the initiative to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement through

steps aimed at rallying all peoples of the region in order to ensure that the Balkans can move together towards greater stability, security and inter-ethnic peace.

When a delegation from Bosnia and Herzegovina first approached us about the need to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the tragedy at Srebrenica, we agreed that it should be done in a solemn manner, given the special sensitivity of the issue for people living in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region as a whole. We said that what we needed to do was to emphasize the positive ground that has been covered and to look to the future. That is exactly what the delegation of the United Kingdom was saying at the beginning when it stated that it was ready to prepare a Security Council draft resolution. However, the implementation of this initiative has taken a different direction.

The draft resolution (S/2015/508) submitted by the United Kingdom turned out to be unhelpful, confrontational and politically motivated. It contains distortions as a result of which the blame for the past is basically placed on one people. The approach whereby one responsible party is singled out for a war crime is not legitimate and could result in even greater division within Bosnian society. From the very beginning, we tried to ensure that the document was balanced. We proposed an alternative option based on a forward-looking approach; however, our statements were ignored.

In addition, the authors of the draft resolution used the anniversary of the tragic events at Srebrenica to introduce certain concepts that have not been agreed at the international level, including intrusive approaches to human rights that could lead to interference in the internal affairs of States.

The British draft resolution immediately aroused an extremely painful reaction in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond. The diametrically opposed proposals coming from the various entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina serve to illustrate that the draft resolution before us will not promote peace in the Balkans, but will instead doom the region to tension and make the prospects for sustainable peace ever more remote. That reaction is in evidence in the letters addressed to the members of the Security Council and to the Secretary-General by the Serbian member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the President of the Republika Srpska and the President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia. We also received similar letters.

This issue has been the subject of considerable controversy in Bosnia and Herzegovnia — so much so that we can even talk about the real threat that it could undermine the country's stability, so hard-won through the implementation of the Dayton Agreement. In addition, more broadly, we cannot overlook the attempts to exert political pressure on Banja Luka and Belgrade.

We are convinced that the role of the Security Council should be to strengthen the foundations of international peace and security, rather than undermining them. Everyone must do his own job. Let historians analyse the vicissitudes of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia and its genesis, including the role of the various countries and alliances that took hasty decisions. Let experts help the Secretariat and the international community to understand where our weaknesses lay. But let us not immerse the Security Council in historical events, for we already face too many unresolved issues in the contemporary world. Let them do their work. Let them give us the necessary assessments. Let the national and international tribunals render their verdicts. Justice must prevail. All perpetrators, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation, must be punished.

Given that there is no consensus on this issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself — as the Council is aware, neither in the country's Parliament or among the members of the Presidency — the Council's adoption of this draft resolution in its present form would be completely counterproductive and lead to greater tension in the region.

A major commemoration will be held in Srebrenica on 11 July. It is important to note that the Serbian leadership will participate in the event, and it would be wrong for us in the Security Council to prejudge it by adopting a destructive document or by demonstrating that the Council's members are split. We therefore appeal to the authors of the draft resolution and to you, Mr. President, not to put the draft resolution to the vote. Otherwise, we will be forced to vote against it for the reasons I have set out here.

If it turns out to be inevitable, our negative vote will not mean that we are indifferent to the suffering of the relatives of the victims of the tragedy at Srebrenica and elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We ourselves have been through a lot.

In future, we will continue to make the utmost effort to consistently implement the Dayton Peace Agreement and effectively contribute to further normalization of the situation in the Balkan region, including by promoting reconciliation, ensuring that there is a genuine collective security system and promoting an atmosphere of trust and cooperation. We believe that is something all of us need to aim for.

I would like to reiterate my proposal not to put to the vote the draft resolution we have before us.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Currently, Security Council members still have grave concerns about the draft resolution to commemorate the Srebrenica event (S/2015/508). To force a vote on a draft resolution on which major differences still remain is not in conformity with national reconciliation within Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the region at large. It will also affect the unity of the members of the Council. China believes that the Council members can continue their exchange of views on the draft resolution, but should refrain from hasty actions.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): The draft resolution (S/2015/508) before us is a balanced text. We have worked very hard to make sure that it is so and that it remembers the past respectfully and sensitively. Let me be clear: there were victims on all sides. That is clearly set out in the text. Crimes were committed against all sides and by all sides. Again, that is clear in the text.

This draft resolution does not accuse the Serb people; instead, it supports reconciliation. Recognition of the past is a prerequisite for that. It also calls on the United Nations and all of us to learn the lessons and act on the painful lessons from the genocide at Srebrenica.

All Council members know how hard we have worked to find a consensus on the text. We have been working on this for over a month. We delayed the vote from yesterday until today to make that possibility have best chance of success. We thank all members for their support and patience while we did that.

Members of the Council will also know that an unbridgeable gap lies at the heart or our respective differences. The horrific events at Srebrenica amounted to a genocide. That is not a verdict that the Security Council is seeking to establish, but a verdict that is clearly set out in judgments from the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice. To call it anything else now will hinder, and not help, reconciliation. That is why many voices from the region are calling for us to proceed and to vote, and thereby honouring the victims as we do so. For that reason, I think it is vital now that we proceed to a vote.

The President: The principle sponsor of the draft resolution has asked that we proceed to a vote. I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Chad, Chile, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain, United Kingdom, United States of America

Against:

Russian Federation

Abstentions:

Angola, China, Nigeria, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President: There were 10 votes in favour, 1 vote against and 4 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson and High Commissioner for Human Rights Al Hussein for their powerful briefings.

I was a 24-year-old reporter in July 1995 living in Sarajevo when the Bosnian Serbs made their move on Srebrenica. I was there when, a few days after the Srebrenica safe area fell, a colleague first told me about reports of mass executions. "No!" was all I could say. "No!" Even having lived in a war zone and under siege, and even having seen innumerable atrocities, I could not bring myself to believe that Bosnian Serb forces would execute every Muslim man and boy in their custody. For all of the brutality of a horrific war, that was a singular horror. It was genocide, a fact now proven again and again by international tribunals.

When I learned that Russia was planning to veto the Security Council draft resolution (S/2015/508) commemorating the genocide in Srebrenica, I confess I had a similar reaction: "No!" I said. "No!" Why would Russia vote to deny recognition of the Srebrenica genocide? Today's vote mattered. It mattered hugely to

the families of the victims of the Srebrenica genocide. Russia's veto is heartbreaking for those families, and it is a further stain on the Council's record.

I spent the tenth and the fifteenth anniversaries of the genocide in Srebrenica — there, in Srebrenica. In 2005 I met up with my former colleague journalist David Rohde, who is here with us today. In August 1995, days after the massacres, it was David who discovered a leg protruding from a mass grave site in the woods and fields of Nova Kasaba. Subsequently, he discovered a pile of canes and another pile, of eyeglasses — the canes of the old men who had been executed for one reason: because they were Bosnian Muslim. Canes!

In 2005 David and I joined the Bosnian families of those who had been massacred as they walked along the route that many of Srebrenica's Muslim men and boys had taken while fleeing the fallen safe area. The families were tracing their loved ones' journeys in reverse. Although it was 10 years since the genocide, all along the route we came across the human remains of the victims: scraps of clothing, shoes, discarded identification cards and even scattered bone fragments protruding from the earth.

In 2010, when I led a United States presidential delegation to Srebrenica on behalf of President Obama, I retraced the final leg of that journey again. Many children of those killed in Srebrenica were interspersed among those on the march. Most were teenage girls and young women who had grown up without fathers and brothers. Far fewer young men than women took part in the walk — a chilling result of the fact that so many young boys had been executed. Remains were still being dug up and mourned. One mother I met in Srebrenica was burying the fourth of her five sons at a mass grave site in the centre of town. She was still searching for the remains of her fifth. It is that mother's truth and pain that was vetoed by Russia today.

Why should we continue to retrace victim's harrowing journey, or why, for that matter, do we continue to gather, whether it is here at the United Nations, or in Srebrenica, to mark this day and to retell these gut-wrenching accounts of the victims? We revisit so we can try to learn from our collective failure — and by ours, I mean the world's, the Security Council's and particularly that of Governments, including mine, that had the power to prevent what happened but did not.

Bosnians believed that they would be protected by a United Nations flag and by the principles it stood for. They took refuge in a place literally called a safe area, yet when Bosnian Serb forces probed the United Nations willingness to protect civilians under its watch, the peacekeepers melted away and the Bosnian Serbs pressed ahead. First, they cut off fuel and other essential supplies; they then attacked the peacekeepers' outposts; and after that, they disarmed and humiliated the peacekeepers themselves. Promised NATO air strikes never materialized.

We also commemorate Srebrenica to show our ongoing commitment to holding accountable the perpetrators of those atrocities. The perpetrators of the genocide in Srebrenica killed more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys and raped countless women and girls, in part because they felt confident that they would never be punished. That is why it is so important that all of the indicted masterminds and commanders of the genocide in Srebrenica — most notably Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić — are now facing trial for their crimes in The Hague. That shows that the arm of justice is long and that abusive regimes — from the Al-Assad regime that gases its own people to the North Korean Government that works its people to death in gulags — will one day have to answer to their atrocities.

As we saw today, some political leaders and groups denied that genocide took place in Srebrenica or fail to wish to recognize it. Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik last month called the genocide "the biggest sham of the twentieth century". We have heard such statements from Holocaust deniers and even, more recently, from Rwandan genocide deniers. Individuals who use such phrases humiliate themselves, and they embarrass and mislead those whom they claim to represent. Genocide happened in Srebenica. That is the conclusion reached by both the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Court of Justice, based on mounds of evidence. The refusal to acknowledge that genocide occurred is not only deeply hurtful to the victims and their families, who have already endured so much, but it is the very obstacle to reconciliation.

Imagine being the mother of those five sons, killed in the Srebrenica genocide, and being told that a denial of the genocide would advance reconciliation. It is madness — a madness motivated by a similar negation of the Bosnian Muslim experience that helped fuel the slaughter at Srebenica in the first place. As long as the truth is denied — whether in the Council or in the region — there can be no meaningful reconciliation.

Imagine if this were us — if those were our families. Would we reconcile when our experience was being denied? There is no stability in genocide denial. The Council did everything in its power to get Russia on board with this simple draft resolution, which does not even name the perpetrators, but Russia had a red line. The draft resolution could not reference the genocide in Srebrenica; it could not reference a fact.

Twenty years ago, the international community failed to protect the people taking refuge in Srebrenica, and the result was genocide. Today, because of Russia's refusal to call what happened in Srebrenica by its rightful name — genocide — the Council is again failing to live up to its responsibility. This is a veto of a well-established fact, documented by hundreds of thousands of pages of witness testimony, photographic evidence and physical forensic evidence of the kind I encountered on my walks. The Rwandan genocide, like the Srebrenica genocide, is an established fact. Would anybody here dream of arguing that we should not mark the Rwandan genocide or, indeed, that we should deny it because a group of genocide deniers said it might undermine reconciliation or stability? Does Holocaust denial advance reconciliation, or do we all agree that recognition and remembrance are the key, critical ingredients to moving forward? Everyone here knows the answer to those questions, yet a number of countries today have chosen to remain neutral on genocide recognition by abstaining from supporting the draft resolution.

If the mothers of the boys executed in Srebrenica — boys executed just because they were Bosnian Muslims — were present today, they would ask how anybody could abstain on their reality; but, far worse, they would ask how any country could use the privilege of permanent membership on the Council to negate entirely what has happened to them. The crime of genocide is the crime that the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was written and ratified to prevent and punish. The crime of genocide in Srebrenica is what the genocide Convention, which all of us have ratified, exists to prevent and punish.

Reconciliation cannot be built by burying the dark parts of one's history, however unsettling they may be. At the hearings at the ICTY, perpetrators and victims alike testified to how heavy machinery had been brought in to dig up the earth in order to bury victims before the executions even occurred. As the victims — many of them blindfolded with their hands bound — were led to their death, they heard not only gunshots and cries, but also the roar of bulldozers digging the mass graves in which they would eventually be buried.

In closing, I would just like to tell one story. Ramiz Nukić nearly ended up in one of those mass graves. As Bosnian Serb forces approached Potocari in July 1995, he said goodbye to his wife and children and fled into the forest with his father, brother and thousands of other Bosnian men and boys. He shared his story recently with a reporter. When the men and boys paused briefly at the top of a hill, tanks and guns opened fire. His father and brother were killed immediately, along with others. Nukić himself managed to escape, eventually finding his way to a refugee camp.

In 1999, Nukić returned to Potocari and found his way back to that hill. He found bloodied clothes and shoes and three skeletons there, but none belonged to his family. Since then, he has spent every single day searching the woods around Srebenica for victims' remains. What began as a search for his father and brother has become a search for the remains of all victims. He has said that a day rarely goes by that he does not find some remains, which he reports to Bosnia's Missing Persons Institute, which then tests the bones' DNA against a network of survivors' DNA. The identification is important for victims' families, particularly those who never have been able to confirm what happened to their loved ones and who expect to find out that they were killed but have nothing tangible to prove it. The remains help give them a long overdue sense of closure. Thanks to Nukić, many bones got their names, as a staffer at the Institute has said.

This year, partial remains of Nukić's father were finally found — though not by Nukić himself — in a mass grave. Nukić will bury his father on Saturday in Srebenica — one of 136 newly identified victims to be buried alongside the 6,241 victims already interred in a joint cemetery there. He will be joined by thousands of mourners who assemble each year to mark the genocide. On recovering part of his own father, Nukić said, "Although he is not complete, I will bury him, and I will know where his grave is". He said he intends to keep searching for the remains of other victims for as long as he lives.

We too must continue to search relentlessly for the full truth about Srebenica. The remains of more than 1,000 victims are still out there. They continue to haunt us, and we cannot rest until they are all

found. Only by unearthing those truths and only by recognizing this genocide, the gravity of this genocide and how we outside failed to prevent it will we be able to help the region move beyond such a dark part of its history — help it walk towards greater reconciliation, which we all seek — and live up to the promise of preventing genocide in our time.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): France deeply regrets Russia's opposition to the adoption of a draft resolution whose goal was to honour the memory not only of the victims of the genocide in Srebenica, but also that of the innocent victims on all sides during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to recall the Security Council's special responsibility to prevent such massacres. A subject such as this deserved unanimous support from the Council. But by opposing this draft resolution, Russia has prevented the Security Council from expressing any support for the commemoration and remembrance of the victims of the genocide and the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Under the pretext of ensuring respect for a particular remembrance, Russia has opposed the Security Council's enjoining the parties to move beyond the suffering of the past and to advance with determination on the path to reconciliation. Reconciliation will require recognition of the genocide committed in Srebrenica 20 years ago, which was defined as such by international courts including the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice.

Justice — and we cannot make this point strongly enough — is the cornerstone of reconciliation and peace. The text, which we backed from the very beginning, had the aim of remembrance, but it was also forward-looking. It was also aimed at assisting in the process of reconciliation among the peoples of the Balkans and helping them forge a future of security and peace. We deeply regret the failure to adopt the draft resolution today, but we will not give up. We must continue to work together for reconciliation and peace. That is the responsibility of us all.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to reiterate first and foremost that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela condemns unequivocally and robustly the genocide carried out in Srebrenica 20 years ago, as it does any crime against humanity, wherever perpetrated and irrespective of its motivation.

Seventy years after the collapse of Nazism and fascism and that totalitarian ideology, after the Holocaust carried out against the Jewish people and the killing of Soviet Jews and other peoples that were victims of fascism, the world continues to witness acts of genocide and war crimes, as happened in Rwanda, Srebrenica, Iraq and Palestine and at Sabra and Shatila. All of this calls into question both the effectiveness of international mechanisms established to prevent such atrocities as well as our own human condition.

My country abstained in the voting on the draft resolution in the belief that it was not a balanced text, because it attributes full responsibility for what happened to just one party to the conflict, omitting the complexities of the situation. Venezuela believes that one cannot single out an entire people for actions carried out by extremist elements, motivated by hatred and intolerance, that hide their actions behind the flag of fervent nationalism.

In a similar vein, the aforementioned draft contains elements that had not previously been agreed on and are controversial in the United Nations, such as the concept of the responsibility to protect, which detracts from the primary responsibility of the State itself for the promotion and respect of human rights and undermines the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for sovereignty. We believe that justice needs to be built on a foundation of truth, and that is why we welcome the work done by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which is responsible for trying those responsible for atrocities in the context of the conflict that took place in the territories that made up the former Yugoslavia.

We also need to bear in mind that the proposed draft resolution did not enjoy consensus support from the authorities and the peoples of the region in question, who are those who are responsible for advancing, with the support of the international community, the process of peacebuilding and ensuring political stability in the region.

Given that, we believe that the draft, rather than contributing to reconciliation, would serve to exacerbate divisions between the Bosniak, Serb and Croat communities, which live together in Bosnia and Herzegovina and must work to build a common future based on peace, solidarity, dialogue and respect for human rights. The work of the United Nations should be aimed at fostering understanding among the peoples

of the Balkans. It is for that reason that we are focusing on reconciliation among the parties. In order to achieve that, it is imperative to continue the work that was begun in Dayton through the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, which was the result a political consensus among the parties involved.

Mr. Gimolieca (Angola): Angola abstained in the voting today on the draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom on Srebrenica for the following reasons.

First, Angola does not take a position of denial on the issue. Whether we call it mass murder, mass atrocities or genocide, the fact is that we acknowledge that on 11 July 1995, extremely grave events took place in Srebrenica that are tantamount to the crime of genocide, as was recognized by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Our fundamental disagreement stems from the fact that the text of the draft resolution should take into account, in the same manner, the many thousands of victims of massacres from all over the region during the war on the territory that was later to become the independent State of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It had been our expectation that the text would take stock of the level of reconciliation and cooperation among the States and communities in the region and look forward to a future of peace, to healing and reconciliation and the building of a better future for all of the peoples made neighbours by geography and history to share the past, the present and the future.

Twenty years after the events in the former Yugoslavia, such a draft resolution would not make any tangible contribution to the ongoing and still-fragile process of reconciliation and could have a negative impact on the efforts of the responsible leaders of the Balkan States to create a better common future, which have already produced significant results. It had been our expectation that the final text of the draft resolution would translate a required level of compromise among the members of the Security Council, permitting a consensual text in which all members would recognize themselves.

We would further wish to see a draft resolution focusing on positive aspects, addressing genuine reconciliation, dealing with the past as a lesson to be learned and seeking a future-oriented approach by helping the region to face the needs of the present and the future by encouraging, facilitating and accelerating the process of reconciliation and cooperation in the Balkans.

The President: I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, and your team on New Zealand's assumption of the presidency of the Council, and I wish you every success in this function. I would like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, for their statements.

Chad welcomes the organization of this meeting to commemorate the Srebrenica massacre and to pay tribute to the victims. We express our solidarity with the survivors and encourage the efforts at reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In July 1995, more than 8,000 Muslim men and adolescents were massacred in three days in Srebrenica during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, even though the town had been declared a safe area by the United Nations and a contingent of Blue Helmets was present there. We should recall that the atrocity in Srebrenica is the worst massacre committed in Europe since the Second World War, and has been described as genocide by international courts. The victims at Srebrenica were targeted because of their identity, and the men were brutally separated from the women and children before being transported to previously chosen sites to be coldly and methodically massacred in full view of the whole world.

Those massacres weigh on our collective conscience and will always do so. The international community bears a crushing responsibility because of its silence and refusal to act in the face of the atrocities. Even today, the circumstances under which the population of Srebrenica in the safe area was abandoned remain unclear. It is important that we make an effort at remembrance so that the truth can be established. We therefore welcome the efforts of the Netherlands, which has investigated the behaviour of its battalions during the Srebrenica massacre and published several reports.

The genocide in Srebrenica, carried out less than a year after that of Rwandan Tutsis in 1994, seriously calls into question the tools at the international community's disposal and its capacity to react to the precursors of mass crimes. While the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 failed to draw the attention of the international

community, we must also note with regret that the world also remained passive in the face of the preparations for the Srebrenica genocide. This is an opportunity for the whole international community to reflect on the lessons to be learned from one of the darkest moments in history, and to reaffirm its determination to prevent genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The international community should therefore continuously assess the effectiveness of the tools at its disposal and should put prevention at the heart of its efforts to identify situations that could result in mass crimes.

The situation in Bosnia remains delicate, and tensions between the communities are high. Lasting peace and reconciliation in the country depend on impartial justice for victims and their relatives. Justice must be done to heal wounds and reconcile a shattered society. We therefore welcome the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and encourage it to pursue and complete its mandate. It is of course the responsibility of the State concerned to continue and intensify its efforts to promote and consolidate the momentum of national peace and reconciliation.

We understand the dilemmas of cultural diversity from our own experience, and we therefore encourage the spirit of tolerance, the acceptance of differences and respect for diversity. Of necessity, reconciliation depends on recognizing the pain and suffering of the victims of genocide. We therefore encourage the implementation of measures designed to build mutual trust with a view to genuine national reconciliation and peaceful coexistence in the region.

The continuous commemoration of genocide and the establishment of such memorials as the one at Potočari are also important to the process. The only way in which the horrors of the past will not be forgotten is to commemorate them regularly so that they are never repeated. Chad therefore voted in favour of the draft resolution (S/2015/508) that was just put to the vote, but which failed due to the veto of a permanent member. We profoundly regret the use of the veto in circumstances as sensitive as those having to do with combating mass crimes, even though the draft resolution did no more than set the genocide in its historical context, without accusing by name any party whatsoever.

In conclusion, we believe that the responsibility to protect must be reflected in substantive measures to prevent the most serious crimes by learning the lessons of the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica, to which the international community responded with indifference. Learning those lessons will require a greater sense of responsibility, commitment and reactivity in the prevention of mass crimes. Only strong determination and a common willingness to fight together against crimes of genocide and grave violations of human rights will allow us to break with the past.

Humanitarian organizations also have an important role to play in prevention, through awareness-raising. In that regard, we would like to pay a well-earned tribute to the humanitarian organizations present in Srebrenica in 1995 for the assistance they gave to the population, their condemnation of the forced displacement and their calls of alarm regarding the possibility of massacres, which were unfortunately not heeded. We hope that those events will never be repeated.

Mrs. Kawar (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking the Deputy Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for their comprehensive briefings.

Jordan regrets the fact that the draft resolution (S/2015/508) was not adopted today. As we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the greatest massacre Europe has known since the Second World War, we cannot, as the United Nations, forget this bloody tragedy and the crimes that followed against the survivors. The tragedy and the calls for help from defenceless towns will remain etched in our memories. It could have been avoided if the United Nations had acted effectively to confront the dangers surrounding Srebrenica. We all know that on the eve of the massacre there were neither combatants nor weapons in the town. The inhabitants were only children, women, elderly people and unarmed men, who were killed in cold blood with the full knowledge of the United Nations peacekeeping forces. Twenty years after the massacre, we must ask ourselves what lessons the United Nations can learn to prevent such a tragedy from being repeated and what it can do for the families of the victims.

One of the most important lessons that the Organization can learn and must develop from the massacre is that a genocide early-warning system must be established so that such events can be monitored and preventive diplomatic efforts intensified. We therefore welcomed the establishment of the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, whose work must continue as part of an overarching early warning system. But the efforts of the Office of the Special Adviser will be useless unless

the Security Council works together to implement in a timely manner the necessary resolutions when national Governments are unable to protect their citizens under imminent threat. Furthermore, States Members of the United Nations must make available the resources to support the early-warning system, its various offices and the United Nations peacekeeping missions so that those operations can properly and nobly discharge their mandate.

We would like to encourage all States that have not yet signed or ratified the relevant international instruments, particularly the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1997 Additional Protocols, to do so. We should all have signed all of those instruments.

Moreover, we must ensure the adoption of national laws and legislation to ensure the robustness of the rule of law and the full participation and involvement of civil society in governance, so as to prevent incitement to violence through hatred and calls to target given groups in society. Incitement to hatred can pave the way to violence, thus leading to reprehensible acts such as the massacre that the Council is commemorating today.

A massacre is not frozen in time. Its aftermath remains present in the survivors, as we have seen in the faces of the survivors of Srebrenica 20 years later. Delivering justice requires us to ensure the upholding of justice and the absence of impunity, so that the families of the victims can receive the justice they deserve, thereby becoming part of the reconciliation process in the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Jordan appeals to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to continue its work. We call upon all partners to continue to support the ICTY to ensure the necessary political will to support the efforts of the international community to successfully deliver justice.

We recognize the improvement in the Organization's working methods since the Srebrenica massacre in order to prevent similar massacres or genocides in conflict areas. Nevertheless, we must continue to shoulder our responsibilities boldly and judiciously to rectify the errors of the past and not to repeat them and to properly meet today's challenges in order to ensure that tragedies and massacres of this nature never happen again in any region of the world.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights for their briefings. The twentieth anniversary of the massacre of more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica — an atrocious act of genocide — should be an occasion for reflection. We need to reflect on the lapses on so many levels that allowed the massacre to take place and assure ourselves that such an atrocity will never occur again. We also need to reflect on the progress that has been made on reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina since that unfortunate event. We encourage the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to put the past behind them and forge ahead within a united and peaceful country.

States have the primary responsibility to protect their populations against mass atrocities. In that regard, it is the obligation of every State to implement their commitments made under the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. The international community in general, and the Security Council in particular, must live up to their responsibilities to ensure that never again will the world witness the horrors of genocide.

Nigeria supports the formation of a global network of focal points on the responsibility to protect, as that responsibility is only as consistent, powerful and effective as practitioners make it. Therefore, all States Members of the United Nations have the responsibility to protect citizens from mass atrocities.

Developing the institutions needed to predict and prevent genocide is crucial. Early-warning mechanisms, programmes for conflict prevention, standing forces for rapid intervention and international courts for effective punishment should be prioritized. Political will on the part of Governments and international organizations is essential in narrowing the gap between the desperation of people in dire situations and addressing early-warning signals.

Nigeria believes that formulating an international contingency plan that can be promptly carried out in a case of a serious humanitarian crisis may be one more way to address those challenges. Regional cooperation and partnerships with non-governmental organizations in the field of genocide prevention should be strengthened. A robust campaign against acts of genocide and other atrocities must be sustained.

Nigeria remains firmly committed to the fight against impunity. We believe that impunity must be addressed resolutely wherever it occurs in the world.

The fight against impunity and the prevention of mass atrocity crimes are national priorities for us. Our belief in the need for global action against mass atrocity crimes and security threats to humankind underpins our ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the Arms Trade Treaty and other relevant international legal instruments.

The implementation of the Rights Up Front initiative, launched by the Secretary-General in December 2013, with a human rights mandate, will contribute to strengthening the capacity of the United Nations and the Security Council in responding to conflicts in a timely manner. This laudable initiative should be sustained.

We reaffirm our support to the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and to the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect. Their briefings to the Security Council are an early-warning mechanism. We call for more regular briefings by those officials, especially when civilians are faced with an imminent threat of mass atrocity crimes. We would urge the Council to give consideration to holding an annual open debate on the prevention of genocide, in the same manner the Council regularly holds debates on the protection of civilians, on women and peace and security and on other thematic issues on its agenda.

The protection of civilians is an important aspect of the mandates of peacekeeping missions today. We therefore call for the integration of the United Nations framework of analysis for atrocity crimes into the planning for peacekeeping operations. That would give peacekeepers a better understanding of the risk factors that could trigger mass atrocity crimes and enhance the protection of civilians.

Finally, the world must not forget the victims of the massacre at Srebrenica. Out of respect for their loved ones, Nigeria supports the designation of 11 July as an international day of remembrance.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I also thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights for his briefing.

Spain deeply regrets the Russian veto of the draft resolution (S/2015/508), submitted by the United Kingdom to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide. As the Deputy Secretary-General mentioned at the outset, one of the major responsibilities of the United Nations and of the Security Council is to prevent atrocity crimes such as the one that occurred in Srebrenica two decades ago. Vetoing such an initiative represents two steps backwards in the Organization's efforts to support progress in terms of the responsibility to protect our citizens and in limiting the use of the veto for atrocity crimes.

The Security Council meets very frequently and addresses a great many issues very seriously. However, the issue before us today has special significance. Today we are meeting to honour the memory of the victims of one of the most tragic episodes in Europe in recent history and to express our solidarity and respect to the survivors and the relatives of those who died. But we are also pointedly meeting to look towards the future and to reiterate unequivocally once again that the events of 20 years ago will never happen again.

The conflict that devastated Bosnia and Herzegovina of 20 years ago, with all of its unspeakable crimes, is one of the worst tragedies in the history of Europe in the second half of the twentieth century. The genocide carried out in Srebrenica in July 1995 was undoubtedly an atrocity that we must all deplore. As always occurs in war, nobody wins, everybody loses, and all parties suffer. All parties are victims who weep. The victims of Srebrenica are our victims.

Over the past 20 years, the United Nations has done admirable work on the basis of lessons learned. We have worked very hard on an early warning system and on the prevention of atrocities, such as that we commemorate today. Vital contributions have been made to our work, including the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (General Assembly resolution 60/1) on the responsibility to protect. We now have such posts as the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect, who report to the Secretary-General and who play a huge role in prevention and protection. The same is true of the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and for Children and Armed Conflicts. Finally, we also have the Secretary-General's Rights Up Front initiative.

Spain is contributing to all those efforts. A meeting of the Global Network for Focal Points on the Responsibility to Protect was held just recently, in Madrid on 23 and 24 June, which considered, among other topics, the new challenges and threats confronting the most vulnerable populations and the contemporary factors linked to crimes against humanity.

But the most important lessons that we have learned over the 20 years since Srebrenica have been in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself. Twenty years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, which laid the foundations of peace and launched Bosnia and Herzegovina on the path towards a new era, the country is advancing down the path of reconciliation, socioeconomic progress, and full integration into Europe, to which it belongs in its own right.

A few months ago in the biannual debate on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see S/PV.7440), we welcomed the entrance into force of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between that country and the European Union. We welcome the future-oriented perspective shown by leaders of all political stripes in undertaking that written commitment and expressing the voice and the desire of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue down the path of reform and stability. That is the path to follow. That is today's Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that is why we commemorate all the victims who have suffered.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Elliasson and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Al Hussein, for their briefings.

The General Assembly's commemoration on 1 July, organized by the Bosnia and Herzegovina in the presence of the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, represented an extremely powerful and moving and moment of gathering and remembering. Today, it is the Council's turn to recall the victims of the massacre and to show its solidarity with the families who lost a loved one, friend or neighbour in Srebrenica. It is important for us, too, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica and to pay tribute to all the innocent victims on all sides of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is also essential to collectively learn from the past to improve our future actions. When such a massacre takes place, it always represents a terrible collective failure. The United Nations shares responsibility because it failed to fulfil its founding mission in Srebrenica for the maintenance of international peace and security and for the protection of the civilian population.

We know that prevention must be at the heart of our actions when human lives are in danger. Since the genocide in Srebrenica, the United Nations has developed its own mechanisms to prevent such tragedies from recurring. Preventing means above all warning. A first step was the establishment of the joint Office for the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, now headed by Mr. Adama Dieng, which I welcome. The Office acts as an early warning mechanism for the Security Council by bringing to its attention any situation that could degenerate into genocide.

Prevention also means acting. The second step was the adoption in 2005 by the Heads of State and Government of the key concept of responsibility to protect. Narrowing the scope of the concept or questioning it would be irresponsible and an affront to the victims of multiple massacres and genocides. Ten years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2) and the recognition of the concept of the responsibility to protect, it is our duty to continue to implement that principle.

Prevention also means judging. In 1948, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide anticipated the establishment of an international criminal court. Fifty years later, we finally adopt the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court. Meanwhile, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has helped to bring to justice the main perpetrators of violations of international law in the territory of the former Yugoslavia committed since 1991. At the heart of the reconciliation process, the Court remains an essential vehicle for memory and reparation.

Despite such progress, it is clear that there are still many tragic situations in which the United Nations remains powerless. In Syria, crimes against humanity and war crimes are committed every day before our eyes, and the Security Council remains paralysed. In such critical situations, the Council must be able to respond and assume its responsibilities. In is to that end that France is pushing for the five permanent members to voluntarily commit to renouncing the use of the veto in cases of mass crimes. The use of the veto is not a privilege; it is a responsibility. It is therefore up to the permanent members first of all to show that they are responsible within the framework of the Council.

Twenty years ago, on 11 July 1995, more than 8,000 adults and children were massacred in Srebrenica. Those events have been described as genocide by both the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice, and mark one

of the most tragic and dramatic events in the Bosnian war. To this day, as has been recalled, it is the worst massacre in Europe since the Second World War.

Unfortunately, the Security Council today could not adopt a draft resolution to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide and to pay tribute to all the innocent victims on all sides of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As I said in my explanation of vote, France deeply regrets the fact that Russia opposed a text, whose basic value of which is commemorative, because of the fracture lines which the local populations themselves want to put behind them. The draft resolution would not only commemorate the event, which is critical, but also underline the importance of rapprochement among the States of the region centred on a shared European future. It was in that spirit that we helped to write and supported the draft text, which recalls that the future of the Balkan populations, like that of the entire European continent, is not to perpetuate the problems of a tragic and painful past but rather to build a common destiny based on reconciliation.

As a French and European citizen, I welcome the progress made in recent years in the region to ensure a better future for the generations born after Srebrenica. I also welcome the fact that all Balkan States are moving towards the European Union and joining in a common project based on peace and tolerance. These strong values guided the founders of the European project, whose aim was reconciliation from the outset. Sixty years later, we have covered a very impressive distance that is undoubtedly unprecedented in history. France, with the European Union, hopes that all the Balkan countries will become full parties to the European project.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): We commend New Zealand for convening this historic meeting of the Council to pay tribute to the victims of the Srebrenica genocide 20 years ago. We are grateful to Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein for their respective briefings.

Having previously served in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I attended the annual commemoration of the Srebrenica massacre. It was very painful for me, particularly witnessing first-hand the sorrow and agony of the mothers of Srebrenica as they buried their loved ones after a painstaking process of collecting and identifying the remains found in mass graves. To date, over 1,000 victims of the massacre have yet to be found. As one of the mothers put it: "Every year, I think this is the year I will bury my son".

Today's meeting is indeed timely, not only in conjunction with the twentieth anniversary of Srebrenica, but also in view of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. On this solemn occasion, on behalf of the people and Government of Malaysia, I wish to convey our deepest and heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the families and loved ones of those who perished at Srebrenica. As the oft-quoted saying goes: "Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it".

In light of the region's troubled history and signs of rising ethno-nationalism, we believe that it is crucial for the Council and for the international community to send a strong signal condemning genocide and its denial. We are convinced that the substance and the uncovering of the truth, particularly on the fate of those killed at Srebrenica, will go a long way towards promoting and deepening national healing and reconciliation. In that spirit, Malaysia worked alongside other Council members to achieve an outcome that would support such aspirations. We believe that the draft resolution initiated by the United Kingdom would have made a serious and substantive contribution to that end, and as such we co-sponsored and voted in favour of it.

In recalling the statements and views expressed during the Srebrenica commemoration event last week, one particular statement stands out — that of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's assessment that the Secretariat, the Security Council and Member States share the blame for failing to prevent the genocide at Srebrenica, despite the mounting warning signs. I would like to believe that, 20 years after Srebrenica, we have come a long way, particularly in learning from the mistakes of the past. We are encouraged by the tangible improvements in the workings of the United Nations, including improved peacekeeping capabilities, the establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the ongoing conversations on the doctrine of the responsibility to protect.

After the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide and Srebrenica, we must pause to reflect and ask ourselves: How many times will the world have to bear the unfulfilled promises of "never again"? The international community, particularly the Council, owes it to the victims and the loved ones to live up to that promise, including by exercising our collective

responsibility to protect civilians from the most serious international crimes and to learn from the mistakes of the past.

We remain concerned that the lack of political will and divisions in the Council could lead to devastasting tragedies at the risk of the loss of multitudes of innocent lives. In our view, tragedies such as that of Srebrenica could have been prevented had the Council been united and been able to muster the necessary political will. Malaysia believes that ending impunity is crucial to preventing future atrocities. While we failed to prevent Srebrenica, we must at least strive to ensure that justice is served for its victims. In that regard, Malaysia continues to support the work of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in ensuring accountability for the crimes committed during the war in the region. We urge all States to fully cooperate with the Tribunal si that it can implement its mandate to completion.

We fully agree that there is a need, evoked by earlier speakers, to look forward and promote reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the region. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Malaysia supported Bosnia and Herzegovina in its reconstruction efforts. We will continue to do so. Through our investments projects, we have sought to bring the various ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina together on the path towards economic and social integration. We firmly believe that the first steps towards reconciliation are to acknowledge and accept the past in order to build a common future. We owe it to the victims of Srebrenica to demonstrate that we have indeed learned from the past, that we are now a better people because of it, and that we will give our all to prevent such atrocities from reoccurring.

Against that backdrop, we are disappointed and deeply regret that the Council has been unable to overcome its division to unite and find agreement in sending a message of solidarity with all the victims of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly those of Srebrenica. We fear that such continued politicized division distorts historical facts and denies justice to the victims of genocide.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson and High Commissioner for Human Rights Al Hussein for their briefings.

In recent years, thanks to the joint efforts of the Government and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation there has remained stable overall. The economy is growing and political process and the rule of law are making headway. Bosnia and Herzegovina is an important country of the Balkans. The interests of the region and the international community at large are served by the maintenance of peace, stability and development and the achievement of harmonious coexistence among all ethnic groups there.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accord. The international community should seize this opportunity to promote continued progress in the efforts of the country's ethnic groups in nation-building, the full implementation of the Dayton Accord, and the achievement of greater progress in all fields.

The conflict that occurred in the former Yugoslavia two decades ago is a dark page in history. China expresses its condolences for the deaths of innocent civilians in Srebrenica and elsewhere. The international community should reflect deeply on history so as to prevent the reoccurrence of such a tragedy. In addressing issues related to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the international community, including the Council, should bear in mind the need to maintain peace and stability in the country and the region, and promote dialogue and reconciliation among all the ethnic groups of Bosnia and Herzegovina and among the countries of the region so as to achieve harmonious coexistence. That should be the consensus of the Council.

China notes that the draft resolution introduced by some countries on the commemoration of the Srebrenica event has given rise to controversy within Bosnia and the countries of the region, and that some Council members have strong reservations on the draft. In such circumstances, forcing a vote on a contentious draft resolution goes against the spirit of promoting reconciliation within Bosnia and Herzegovina and among regional countries, and undermines unity among the Council members. China regrets that, and was therefore compelled to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

China has always respected the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe that the country has the right to choose its own path of development and its own foreign policy. The international community should

respect and support the choices of the Government and people of the country concerning their nationl development; adopt a balanced and cautious approach to the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina; fully respect the leadership, ownership and initiatives of the people of the country; facilitate unity and harmonious development among all ethnic groups of the country; and promote the sustainable economic and social development and long-term security and stability of the country. China stands ready to work with the international community to make a due contribution to the lasting peace, stability and development of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to begin by thanking New Zealand for having organized this meeting as part of the activities to commemorate the shame and the pain of the twentieth anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica. We also grateful for the briefings made by the Deputy Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Chile condemns all crimes against humanity, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. As it is an ethical imperative that such issues be brought to the collective conscience and to acknowledge those cases where the United Nations system has failed, we will be unfailing in our participation in any act commemorating mass violations of human rights and international humanitarian law

Every society has the right to truth and memory. Consequently, the international community must reiterate and reaffirm its solidarity with all victims and their families, while at the same time denouncing crimes that can be classified as genocide — regardless of the context and circumstances. The Council is in no position to judge any State, but rather serve to acknowledge grave facts, the consequences of which still affect us in the present. We are also here to identify concrete ways of contributing to the prevention and eradication of crimes of this nature — through the mechanisms afforded us by international law. The Dayton Peace Accords mapped out a future in which all the participants in this painful conflict could promote tolerance, justice and reconciliation in order to continue forging the necessary conditions for stability and peace, conditions to which the Council is committed.

Ten years after recognizing the responsibility to protect, we reiterate that States bear the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute crimes of that nature. The international community must work with and support Member States that — either on their own volition or because of their inability — fail to meet that obligation.

Firmly committed to the preventive nature of the responsibility to protect, Chile endorsed and participated in the fifth Annual Meeting of the Global Network of Focal Points on the Responsibility to protect, held in Madrid last June.

Whenever faced with the need to prevent such crimes, it is essential that we remember the Secretary-General's Rights Up Front initiative. We should also look to the work of the Special Advisers on Prevention Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, as well as make use of the framework of analysis for atrocity crimes. Another core tool available to us are the mechanisms and/or international tribunals, which ensure accountability and the avoidance of impunity and act as a deterrent tool or as a prevention of future crimes. In that regard, we would like to point out the key roles of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Court.

The Council must support the referral of situations to the International Criminal Court by taking the actions that would facilitate the successful carrying out of investigations, without interfering in matters that are the sole preserve of international justice. The Security Council is in a position to make a contribution to prevention through education, the strengthening of the internal capacity of countries and the exchange of good practices, which enhance early warning. In this vein, we would like to reiterate our call upon those countries that have the right of the veto to refrain from using it in situations of crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide or ethnic cleansing. Otherwise, the Council is left powerless to defend the values and principles that are the most fundamental for humankind. We urge the Security Council, in particular its permanent members, to assume that responsibility.

Memory, truth and justice are core aspects of non-repetition that must be in place to make a reality of our — as yet unfulfilled — hope of "Never again" and to make progress in processes of comprehensive reconciliation and the fight against impunity.

Mr. Gimolieca (Angola): We welcome and thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Eliasson, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Al Hussein, for their comprehensive briefings.

It is our great hope that drawing painful lessons from the past will enable us to improve our actions in the present and create appropriate mechanisms to prevent their recurrence in future. Fundamental to the prevention of conflicts is addressing the root causes, promoting inclusive political dialogue and creating an environment conducive to unity in society-based ethnic diversity. In that context, in memory of all the victims of the conflict in the Balkans that came about with the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, to whom we pay tribute, we would like to express our strong support to the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with Dayton Peace Agreement.

We acknowledge the important role that the General Framework Agreement for Peace, which we also commemorate today on its twentieth anniversary, has played in the post-conflict reconciliation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the broader region. We recall that States bear the primary responsibility to protect their own populations from war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. For its part, the international community has a crucial role to play, if and when a national Government fails to protect its own population. In that sense, while celebrating the tenth anniversary of the concept of the responsibility to protect, adopted in the World Summit Outcome in 2005, we encourage Member States to strengthen prevention efforts in order to end the impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Empowering United Nations peacekeeping missions with vlear mandates to protect civilians is an outstanding task. Effective peacekeeping requires a clear understanding of the risk factors and a trigger for mass atrocity crimes.

We encourage the integration of the United Nations framework of analysis of attrocity crimes into strategies guiding United Nations peace operations. The establishment of the Human Rights Council, reinforcing human rights and international humanitarian law, and the institution of international criminal tribunals, strengthening accountability and international criminal law, have been importants gains in upholding human rights and the rule of law.

Lastly, the international community should provide support to the countries in region in order to strengthen the cooperation among them and support the efforts at reconciliation among Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats.

Mrs. Jakubonė (Lithuania): I thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and the High Commissioner for Human Rights Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein for their briefings.

Today we pay respect and convey our deepest sympathy to all innocent victims and the survivors of the worst crime in Europe since the end of the Second World War — in Srebrenica and surrounding areas in July 1995. The Srebrenica genocide left deep scars: thousands of men executed and buried in mass graves, hundreds of men buried alive, men and women mutilated and slaughtered. We remember all these atrocities so that they never happen again and so that the principles of humankind are never again abandoned. This remembrance is also crucial for prevention and the resolution of other conflicts around the world. It is a matter of deep regret that, due to the Russian veto today, the Council failed to show unity in paying tribute to the civilian victims of the genocide in Srebrenica.

We condemn the genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Srebrenica's crimes cannot be denied. Acceptance of the past and ensuring justice for the victims on all sides is essential in pursuing reconciliation. It is therefore vital that political elites on all sides recognize and accept past events, including the fact of the genocide. The politicians in the region must show courage, overcome their differences and unite for the stable future that all of us wish to see.

Hundreds of families live with the pain of not knowing what happened to their loved ones, not knowing the truth. "It is not living because you want to, but living because you have no choice", said a mother who lost two of her sons in describing what those who lost their families are going through.

Much more needs to be done. Some 20,000 survivors of cruel and premeditated sexual violence are living in the shadows, afraid to speak, afraid to seek justice. They need care, protection and support. The enormous scope of the crime, 20 years on, contrasts sharply with the few dozen convicted perpetrators.

Only truth and justice can nurture peace and stability. The International Court of Justice and the

International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia recognized the genocide at Srebrenica. Those who were behind this tragedy are now standing trial.

The international community and the United Nations, established 70 years ago, meant to save humanity from horrors such as those that the people of the Balkans lived through. The experience in Bosnia was a painful one in the history of the United Nations. This lesson must be learned.

The United Nations today is better equipped to detect the early warning signs of possible atrocities. The responsibility to protect must not remain a concept on paper only. The Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect, as well as the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and for Children and Armed Conflict, are vital elements in this strategy. Their tireless efforts in bringing human rights abuses to the Council's attention are commendable.

But perhaps the most important lesson drawn from these terrible events is that the systemic terrorization of people must be met decisively with all necessary means and with political will, as the Secretary-General outlined in his report. Yet far too often lack of political will and divisions have stood in the way of decisive action, including on the part of the Council. Let me be clear: restraint in the use of the veto in mass atrocity situations should not remain a theoretical option. We call on all permanent members of the Council to declare it forthwith.

Let us use this solemn occasion to encourage the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina to unite in building a better future for their children. Twenty years have not passed without positive changes. The country is taking steps towards its European integration, with strong continuous support for these efforts by the European Union.

The recent agreement by the Parliament and political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina on a broad range of reforms and their commitment to be proactive in the reconciliation process will, hopefully, help them to overcome differences, unite for the future and ensure stability and peace in the region. The international community, including the members of the Council, should and will continue to support these efforts.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom is outraged that Russia has vetoed this draft resolution today. Russia's action tarnishes the memory of all those who died in the Srebrenica genocide. Russia will have to justify its decision to the families of the more than 8,000 people murdered in the worst atrocity in Europe since the Second World War.

The draft resolution did not point fingers of blame, score political points or seek to reopen painful divisions. It did not link the crimes of Srebrenica to the Serb people. It recognized that there were victims on all sides, and it aimed to send a clear message that the Council supports reconciliation in Bosnia.

But reconciliation must be based on a shared acceptance of the fact that genocide occurred at Srebrenica. This is a legal fact, not a political judgement. On this there is no compromise. So it is profoundly regrettable that Russia has chosen to side with those who, by their actions, are preventing reconciliation from moving forward — those who are unwilling to accept the facts today.

Some said that in submitting this draft resolution, we risked ethnic division in the Balkans. The emotional responses in the region in the past weeks show that until past actions are acknowledged and accepted, we cannot move forward. As Adisada Dudic said so poignantly at the commemorative event last week, "Denial does not make the facts go away. It does not change the past. And it certainly does not erase memory".

It is denial, and not this draft resolution, that will cause division. Denial is the final insult to the victims. It undermines the prospects for a secure, peaceful future for Bosnia and Herzegovina — a future that all of its citizens deserve. Because, even two decades on, the horrors some choose to deny are still ongoing for families in Bosnia. The remains of hundreds of the victims of the genocide — fathers, sons, mothers and daughters — have yet to be found. The suffering of their loved ones, and their search for truth, continues to this day. Russia's actions will only exacerbate their grief.

Despite this veto, we must all continue our support for a peaceful, stable and prosperous future for Bosnia, a future based on an acceptance of the past.

Today was an opportunity for the Council to reflect on its responsibility to prevent genocide, both in 1995 and today and in future. This responsibility is made clear in our promise to save future generations from the scourge of war. And yet, 50 years after the end of the Second World War, 50 years after the signing of the United Nations Charter, we broke our promise and

allowed genocide to return to Europe, to a small town in eastern Bosnia, to a United Nations-designated safe haven.

Kofi Annan said that the tragedy of Srebrenica would forever haunt the history of the United Nations. Russia's veto shows that it is hard to lay those ghosts to rest. We must nevertheless continue to reflect on the lessons we have learned as individuals, as countries and as an Organization.

Twenty years on from Srebrenica, we now have an even greater set of tools to predict and prevent conflict and genocide. The High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect play vital roles. The Secretary-General's Human Rights Up Front initiative and the new framework of analysis for atrocity crimes are welcome developments. And beyond the United Nations, we now have even greater access to information of impending conflict. We can see the signs of any slide toward genocide, through non-governmental organizations, human rights monitors and social media.

But early warning is not early action. We knew of the risks at Srebrenica. We saw the reports of ethnic cleansing, the signs of mass graves. We heard the reports from journalists in the field, and yet we did not act. The consequences of our inaction reverberate to this day.

Today, the risks of genocide and mass atrocities still lie beneath the surface, in South Sudan, in Syria, in the spread of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of 20 years ago. We must act where we have early warning. We must find greater unity in the Council and use all of the tools at our disposal to do so. Russia's veto of this draft resolution shows just how difficult it can be to find this unity. But we must persevere, for it is the only way to make "never again" a reality.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of New Zealand.

We have heard today from the Deputy Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights about the events in Srebrenica, which the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice determined involved acts of genocide. New Zealand joined with others in remembering the victims of that genocide. We express our deep condolences to the victims' friends and families.

The devastating effects of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina are still felt today, not least in the memories of those who lost loved ones in the conflict. We offer our sympathy for all victims of that conflict, many of whom perished in mass killings that still shock our collective conscience today.

Thankfully, 20 years on the situation on the ground is, of course, very different. However, after two decades reconciliation remains a live issue that requires continued nurturing. We have seen important steps taken by all sides towards reconciliation. Pledges have been made to move further down this path to peace and friendship. New Zealand encourages all involved to walk this path together.

In his 1999 report on the Fall of Srebrenica, then Secretary-General Kofi Annan asked

> "how will the United Nations ensure that no future peacekeeping operation witnesses such calamity on its watch? (*A/54/549, para. 469*)"

More than 15 years later, that is a question which is still looking for a comprehensive answer. It is a question to which the memories of all victims of genocide and mass atrocities deserve an answer. We as a Council have a duty to remember the past in order to do everything possible to avoid history repeating itself.

New Zealand deeply regrets that the efforts that we and others made over a considerable period to try to ensure that this commemorative event would be marked by a united Council did not prove possible. While acknowledging the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, since 1945 New Zealand has consistently opposed the veto. New Zealand regrets that despite achieving the support of a majority of Council members, the draft resolution was not adopted because of the exercise of a veto by one of the permanent members. At a commemorative event, it strikes us particularly inappropriate that a veto was used. While it was only one negative vote, the outcome reflects on all of us. It once more demonstrates how we must all find better ways of working to ensire that the Council can reach agreement and act when it should.

The United Nations and the Council failed many victims of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, not least those in Srebrenica. Those failures came at a horrific cost to innocent people on all sides, and

are still felt strongly all these years later. Today, the Council has failed those innocent victims. Looking to the future, in order to avoid another event like that at Srebrenica, or indeed another Rwanda, we must do more than just strive to design better mandates and work to improve the capabilities of peacekeeping missions that the Council authorizes, although of course that is an important place to start. But beyond that, it is clear that the Council should be more active in trying to prevent violent conflict before it begins.

But let us also be honest enough to admit to each other and to ourselves that the only guarantee of preventing the horrors witnessed at Srebrenica from happening again is if we as Member States live up to the Charter commitments we took on as a condition of joining thd Organisation. We all — all Members of the United Nations — have to own this responsibility, irrespective of race, colour, creed or history, or state of development. This is fundamental to our common and shared humanity.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I would urge him and any others who ask to take the floor to remember the solemn spirit of the commemorative we are celebrating today.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to make two comments, one procedural in nature and the other substantive.

The procedural comment is as follows. Today, several representatives have taken the floor twice, once in explanation of vote and once on the substantive issue. We note that, in his first statement, the representative of France did not say a single word in explanation of his vote. We believe that such a statement is inappropriate.

On the substance, some delegations — those of the United States and the United Kingdom in particular — criticized Russia's position. They distorted our position, which, I stress, in no way justifies their comments. I would simply suggest that they should have listened to our statement more carefully. I do, however, also have a number of questions in that regard that I should like to put to the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom.

We recently marked the fortieth anniversary of the end of the war in Viet Nam. Why did we not hold a Security Council meeting to commemorate that? Why was no draft resolution presented to condemn the carpet-bombing of Hanoi, the use of napalm, or the massacre in My Lai led by Lieutenant Calley, who was pardoned by the President of the United States? We also recently marked the tenth anniversary of the illegal invasion of Iraq by the United States and the United Kingdom, as a result of which over a million people may have perished and the entire region remains in crisis to this very day. Why have the United States and the United Kingdom not suggested that the Security Council adopt a resolution on that topic, in which events could be called by their rightful names?

The problem is that the humanism of these delegations can be switched on and off depending on political circumstances, which undermines our trust in their statements and in their actions.

The President: The representative of the United States has asked to make a further statement.

Ms. Power (United States of America): In the spirit of this sober commemoration, I shall be very brief.

First, I would say that every country and every people should grapple with their history, and grappling with that history is a prerequisite to reconciliation. We in this country are going through something like that right now after the events in Charleston with respect to the racial divisions that persist in our society. Every society should look back, but the Russian representative's intervention just now shows not only that Russia is prepared to deny the genocide, but also that, accompanying that denial, it simply wants to distract from that core fact.

There is no distracting from the core fact that 8,000 Muslim men and boys were killed systematically because they were Bosnian Muslims by Bosnian Serbs under the leadership of Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić — not by the Serbian people — and that those families are grieving today doubly, first and foremost because they lost their loved ones, and secondly because our collective effort to recognize and commemorate the genocide in Srebrenica was vetoed by Russia.

The President: The representative of the United Kingdom has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): I shall speak very briefly just to say that this is a 20-year anniversary of an event in which the United Nations as an institution and the Council were deeply associated. It is therefore

absolutely vital and absolutely right that we have focused on this. We were proud to hold the pen on the draft resolution, and seeking to commemorate that event in the way that we have tried to do today has absolutely got to be the right thing to do.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will heed your call, Sir, to take into account the very special nature of this meeting. I shall therefore refrain from responding to the tirades of the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom just now.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7482

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7482nd meeting

Thursday, 9 July 2015, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Van Bohemen	(New Zealand)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (S/2015/510)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (S/2015/510)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Burundi to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs; and Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Al Hussein, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Geneva.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/510, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zerihoun.

Mr. Zerihoun: I have the pleasure to brief the Security Council on the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/510) on the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (MENUB). The report provides an overview of the electoral process and the political and security situations up to the holding of the legislative and communal elections on 29 June. It also highlights the activities of MENUB and other United Nations entities working on Burundi.

As the Security Council is well aware, on 2 July MENUB issued a preliminary statement on the pre-electoral environment and the holding of the legislative and communal elections on 29 June. MENUB assessed that the legislative and communal electoral processes took place against the background of a political crisis and in a climate of widespread fear and intimidation in parts of the country. The fundamental freedoms of participation, assembly, expression, opinion and information suffered increasing restrictions during the campaign period and as election day grew nearer. MENUB observers were present in all 18 provinces, covering 50 of the 119 municipalities, and carried out observations in 145 polling stations.

While MENUB assessed that the Independent National Electoral Commission adequately handled the voter registration and the nomination of candidates, opposition parties repeatedly accused the electoral management body of lacking credibility and independence. Preparations and arrangements made by the Electoral Commission for election day was largely sufficient, and polling activities took place regularly in the observed polling stations. Nationwide, many Burundians went to the polls to cast their votes for the candidates of their choice. However, instances of violence and explosions preceded and in some cases took place alongside election activities, mostly in Bujumbura.

In view of its findings, MENUB concluded that the environment was not conducive to free, credible and inclusive elections. The African Union, the East African Community (EAC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region expressed similar concerns. On 2 July, the Government of Burundi issued a statement in which it emphasized that the communal and legislative elections were conducted in a peaceful, calm and secure environment with a "massive" turnout of voters, and that the participation was free, despite planned efforts by some to undermine the voting process. The following day, the President of the Electoral Commission accused MENUB of observing the elections with "remote-controlled glasses". Some opposition political parties and civil society organizations, notably those opposed to a third term for President Nkurunziza, called the elections a sham and declared that they would not recognize the results.

Following the 29 June election, MENUB has closely monitored the poll counting and announcement of results in various provinces. According to the Electoral Commission, the preliminary results of the election showed that the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) received 60.2 per cent, which corresponds to 77 parliamentary seats, and a coalition of independents led by Agathon Rwasa and Charles Nditije received 11.16 per cent of the votes, which account for 21 seats. The official wing of the Union

pour le progrès national (UPRONA), which is affiliated with the Government, received 2.49 per cent of the votes, which corresponds to two seats in Parliament. The Electoral Commission Chairperson reported on overall voter turnout as 74.3 per cent, with a much smaller turnout of 28 per cent in Bujumbura Mairie. In line with the power-sharing arrangements enshrined in the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi and the Constitution of Burundi, the Electoral Commission intends to assign 21 more seats to meet the requirements of 30 per cent women representation and to balance Hutu, Tutsi and Batwa seats. The results, as I mentioned, have been rejected by the opposition.

Preparations for the presidential election are ongoing. Ballot papers have been printed with all eight candidates approved by the Electoral Commission, including those who have announced they would boycott the election. The distribution of material to different parts of the country has started. Four presidential candidates have launched their campaigns, namely, CNDD-FDD, the Coalition for Peace in Africa, UPRONA and the Forces nationales de libération. The remaining four candidates have not launched their campaigns and belong to political parties and coalitions that have announced their intentions to boycott the polls.

The political and security situations in Burundi have remained tense and volatile since the holding of the legislative and communal elections. The killing of a police officer on 1 July by unidentified armed men sparked a new wave of violence and clashes between the police and residents of the neighbourhood of Cibitoke and Mutakura in Bujumbura. Police raided the area to carry out house-to-house searches, reportedly to disarm the population, which resulted in the killing of five civilians. The police operation took place while Burundi was commemorating its fifty-third anniversary of independence. In a further sign of potential escalation, one of the leaders of the failed coup recently claimed on a Kenyan television channel that his group was responsible for the wave of grenade attacks and security incidents in Burundi, and vowed to continue to use violence to overthrow the Government.

Since the suspension of the political dialogue led by the joint international facilitation team on 26 June, there has not been any formal forum for dialogue among Burundian stakeholders. However, some States members of the East African Community have continued to consult the parties following the decision of the Community on the proposal of its Summit on the formation of a Government of national unity.

The East African Community held its third Emergency Summit on 6 July in Dar es Salaam. In its communiqué, the Summit implicitly recognizes the shortcomings identified by the two previous EAC summits and adopted, among others, the following decisions: first, the postponement of the presidential elections to 30 July; secondly, the appointment of President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda as facilitator of the dialogue among the parties in Burundi; thirdly, the formation of a Government of national unity, involving both those who participated in the elections and those who did not; fourthly, the deployment of an East African Community election observer mission to observe the presidential elections; fifthly, the disarmament of the Imbonerakure and other armed groups and youth groups allied with political parties; and lastly, the deployment of military observers to oversee the disarmament process. So far, the reaction in Burundi has been relatively muted. The Government of Burundi has indicated that it would consider the recommendations, while some opposition members have expressed disappointment that the communiqué did not go far enough.

The Security Council has followed the situation in Burundi for many years through different reincarnations of the United Nations presence that have been dispatched to help implement the 2000 Arusha Agreement and to help consolidate peace and security in Burundi.

It is regrettable that the hard-won progress achieved by Burundians is in serious danger of slipping away. As the Secretary-General indicates in the report before the Council, Burundi is once again on the brink. The grave danger the country faces should not be underestimated, given the increasing polarization and the apparent choice of Burundian leaders to put personal interests before those of the country.

The East African Community summit communiqué provides a clear path forward. The United Nations remains ready to provide whatever support is needed. Burundian actors must accept that political dialogue and compromise is the only way out of the impending downward spiral. They must act responsibly. The Government, first and foremost, has the responsibility to protect all Burundian citizens and their fundamental rights. The opposition, for its part, also needs to disavow the use of violence and agree to enter into political

dialogue with the Government. Time is running out, and the Burundian leaders should do all they can to safeguard the hard-won peace and the letter and spirit of the Arusha Agreement.

The President: I thank Mr. Zerihoun for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Al Hussein.

Mr. Al Hussein: I thank the Council for giving me this opportunity to voice my concern about the deterioration of the human rights situation in Burundi. An escalating pattern of politically motivated violence, coupled with the country's history of recurring bloodshed and atrocities, should alert us to the potential for serious crisis. Already, more than 145,000 people have fled to neighbouring countries, and this movement has increased drastically in recent days. As they pack the few belongings they can carry and abandon their lands and homes, what the people of Burundi are telling us is that they fear their country is on the brink of devastating violence. The risk to human life and to regional stability and development is high.

The crisis arising from President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to run for a third term of office has undermined a decade of steady progress in building democratic institutions and the precious gains achieved in the sense of a common national community. In the past six months, members of opposition parties, civil society activists and media figures who called for the President to respect the Arusha Agreement and the Constitution by standing down after 10 years in office have been targeted for intimidation, severe harassment and arbitrary detention. Peaceful protests have been met with unwarranted use of force, including lethal force, in violation of Burundi's obligation under national and international law to guarantee the right to freedom of assembly. Demonstrators have been imprisoned and subjected to torture and ill-treatment. We have also received reports of extrajudicial killings. To date, these violations have not been investigated, prosecuted or sanctioned.

Apparently determined to ignore every warning signal, the Government pushed through parliamentary and local elections on 29 June, despite pleas by the Secretary-General, the East African Community, the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and multiple other international actors, including the most recent international team of facilitators, for a delay to allow space for dialogue and inclusion. The elections were boycotted by opposition parties and took place in an atmosphere that was far from conducive to a free, fair and inclusive vote. There have been outbreaks of violence, including small arms and grenade attacks, and tension is palpable. Burundians appear to be braced for an explosion of the murderous violence, which has so frequently engulfed the country.

I travelled to Burundi in April and met with the President and top officials of the Government, the Constitutional Court and other key bodies. I noted then the widespread and alarming violence attributed to the Imbonerakure militia, which has been linked to the President's political party. Immediate action must be taken to curtail those assaults and to stem incitement to violence and hatred. In line with the recommendation made during the third emergency summit of Heads of State of the East African Community on the situation in Burundi, I urge the Government to disarm the Imbonerakure militia immediately. All political parties, the President of the Republic, the police and the military should place the well-being of their country above their own political ambitions and interests and take the path of peace and rule of law.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights field office — which we have reinforced — has documented dozens of killings in the past two months, most of them shootings of demonstrators and human rights defenders by members of the Imbonerakure militia and security forces. I draw the Council's attention in particular to the assassination, on 26 May, of Zedi Feruzi, a vocal opposition leader who opposed a third term for the President, and to the attempted assassination of the wife of Agathon Rwasa, another leading political opponent. Some security personnel and Imbonerakure militia members have also been killed.

Contrary to some recent reports, the massive outflows of refugees appear to have been sparked not by rumour but by precise and targeted campaigns of intimidation and terror. Refugees interviewed by my Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania continue to refer to the Imbonerakure militia as the main threat, but some have also stated that militants from other groups are also employing violence — a new and disturbing development.

My Office has also documented over 300 cases of arbitrary arrest and detention of demonstrators, human rights defenders, political opponents and journalists,

some of whom have since been released. We have noted numerous cases of torture and other forms of ill-treatment in detention. A severe crackdown on independent media has led to the closure of most private media and radio stations, with some being burned down. Large numbers of journalists have fled Burundi for fear of reprisals, as have many human rights defenders. Recently we have also seen key members of the President's own political party and Government fleeing the country.

Frequent grenade attacks in public neighbourhoods and a campaign of intimidation of ordinary people by Imbonerakure militia members have created an atmosphere that is grim with fear and panic. Many hard-won gains in inclusive services, institutions and freedoms for the public are also breaking down. Numerous schools have closed, and, in any case, lack of security prevents schoolchildren from attending. The humanitarian impact of the crisis now includes a cholera outbreak among refugees in Tanzania.

Since the 1960s, repeated cycles of uncontrollable violence have devastated Burundi. Although all the country's communities speak the same language and have for centuries lived together in the same hills and communes, these recurring spasms have, in recent decades, laid down a pattern of mistrust, bitterness and pre-emptive violence. In a concerted effort to rebuild social institutions that can effectively mediate differences and address grievances, the international community and regional and national actors came together in Arusha 15 years ago to rebuild an architecture of sustainable peace, with emphasis on the rule of law, observance of human rights, access to effective judicial and other institutions, and participatory democratic governance. Slowly, the country has inched back to greater confidence, more openness and far more inclusion.

Today, however, that effort is in peril. After years of deep work to weave together the fabric of society, communities are reverting to fear. The Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, has noted the risk that what has, to date, been primarily a political crisis could escalate to a level that would pose a high risk of atrocity crimes. The nightmares of Burundi's recent past are close at hand, and among them we must count the massive impact of past episodes of violence on regional development and security.

The people of Burundi and the region deserve far better than these recurring cycles of impunity, suffering and destruction. They have a right to go about their lives peacefully, in freedom, equality and dignity, without fear, and with equitable access to their country's many resources and opportunities. They look to the Council to exert its authority to ensure a speedy political solution to this dreadful crisis.

I ask Council members to bring to bear all possible influence to restore a sense of responsibility among key actors in Burundi. Accountability for all gross human rights violations, including those that have occurred over the past six months, must be ensured. Justice must be served and reason must prevail so that Burundi can return to the path of the rule of law and democracy, stability, confidence and peace, including through elections that are inclusive, transparent and fair. The Arusha Agreement sought to reconstitute a society in which differences, whether political or communal, could be accommodated, and in which the protection of the State could be counted as secure for all. That is the path of development and hope, and it is Burundi's future. To close off that path would be a monumental error that would be remembered for generations.

The President: I thank Mr. Al Hussein for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Shingiro (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin by thanking you, Sir, for convening this important meeting dedicated to the political situation in Burundi, and to congratulate you on your country's accession to the rotating presidency of the Security Council for July. I would also like to thank all the other members of the Council for their ceaseless and most outstanding efforts to help resolve the crisis in Burundi. I also congratulate and thank Mr. Zerihoun and the High Commissioner for Human Rights for their briefings, which have given us more information about that crisis, although my delegation cannot agree with certain implications.

My delegation notes the content of the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi issued on 7 July. I will not refer to it in detail because it covers the period before the elections of 29 June. Certain passages of its 66 paragraphs are therefore no longer relevant, and new information regarding positive developments has

become available. I will therefore address the Council on the current situation, as demanded by recent events.

Before I do so, however, I will make a short comment on the passage in the report regarding the excessive use of force by the national police of Burundi. That accusation is no longer valid, because one of those involved in the abortive putsch of 13 May, a certain Léonard Ndikumana, has just publicly claimed responsibility for the grenade attacks and other violence committed against the police and the civil population during the uprising intended to prepare the way for the coup d'état and, after the putsch, to prevent and torpedo the elections. The claim was made through a Kenyan television company and was relayed by a number of western networks, including Radio France Internationale, TV5 and Deutsche Welle.

By publicly taking responsibility for the attacks that took place in the country, including the grenades mentioned by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which were thrown at women selling fruit next to the central market, those behind the putsch have proved once again that the international community missed the mark when it blamed the attacks on young people affiliated to the ruling party and the national police. Responsibility for the grenade attacks has been claimed and the perpetrators are known. The entire international community should condemn such mindless violence, for which responsibility has been publicly claimed, and demand the immediate arrest of those behind the putsch in the countries that are sheltering them. Now that the perpetrators are known, they must be held responsible for their acts and answer for them in court.

To return to the present, as I had occasion to say on Friday before the Council (see S/PV.7473), on the eve of the legislative and communal elections of 29 June my Government faced a difficult choice between two options: to postpone the elections, as certain partners were requesting, and voluntarily agree to enter an institutional vacuum, with all of the attendant consequences; or to proceed with the elections forthwith and give the country democratic institutions in line with the Constitution of Burundi.

In view of the risk of a constitutional vacuum, my Government decided to proceed with the elections, which allowed the people of Burundi to vote freely on 29 June. As we all saw, the elections took place as planned in a calm and tranquil atmosphere, and no major incidents were reported on election day. All national and regional observers, in particular those from neighbouring countries, gave favourable reports on the conditions in which the elections were held. A single observer mission expressed doubts in its report, for reasons known to all. I will not return to that case; I spoke of it yesterday to the Burundi configuration of the Peacekeeping Commission.

We thank the people of Burundi for turning out in force for these two elections, at which they chose their local councillors and their members of parliament. The turnout of 75 per cent sent a clear message, not only to all Burundians but also to Burundi's partners, that the silent majority, which did not participate in the violent demonstrations designed to make media headlines, was eager to vote. The message is also that nothing other than voter turnout can confer legitimacy on an election. The people of Burundi have spoken, and their voice must be respected.

As I said earlier, peace, calm and security characterized the double election, which certain detractors of Burundian democracy had described, for several months before it was even held, as not being credible.

Participation in the elections of 29 June was impressive, even massive, and free, transparent and peaceful. It was eloquent testimony to the resolve of the Burundian people to restore the country's institutions so as to ensure that mandates were upheld pursuant to basic national law. In the capital, in spite of a few isolated incidents of deliberate intimidation in recently restive neighbourhoods — which, happily, were foiled by law enforcement agents — residents were able to vote freely, thanks first and foremost to the relocation of certain voting centres, which limited major incidents on election day.

In the interior provinces and the 1,001 hills of Burundi, the behaviour of consitituents surprised many national and international observers. Indeed, by noon of election day, more than 95 per cent of registered voters had already voted. That, too, sent a message that our people yearned to vote and that they had done so early in the morning before going to work in the fields. It also proved that what was being demanded in the endless reports had taken hold of the silent majority who wanted to vote come what may.

We note the participation of several political and independent parties on election day. Some of these sought to play what I would call an in-and-out game

by pretending to boycott but also going door to door to convince Burundians to vote for them. That door-to-door exercise has also been noted by the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (MENUB) report (S/2015/510). I wish to stress that the Independent National Electoral Commission never received from any of the parties, coalitions or independent candidates formal requests for the withdrawal of their candidacies for the Communal Council or the legislative election.

Thus, some parties, coalitions and independent candidates had voters who voted for them despite the so-called boycott announced through the media. In upholding civil and political rights recognized in the Burundian Constitution, in particular the right to elect and to be elected, the Commission attributed votes and distributed seats in line with the votes cast. If a political party, coalition of parties or independent candidate does not claim the seat obtained, for whatever reason, the Electoral Code will be applied in line with article 138 of the Electoral Code for the National Assembly, article 185 for the Communal Council, and article 143 for the Senate. In brief, the call for a boycott by the Abibenga Amizero y'Abarundi coalition, headed by Agathon Rwasa, was simply a tactical ploy compounded by nefarious speculations.

Regarding the outcome of the legislative elections, according to a report issued by the Independent National Electoral Commission of 7 July, the incumbent party — the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie — took 77 of the 100 seats, the Union pour le progrès national took 2, and the Amizero coalition took 21. Although this makes a total of 100 seats, in order to adhere to the Arusha Agreement, a number of new seats will also have to be assigned so as to balance the parliamentary membership along gender and ethnicity lines. We hope that Agathon Rwasa will not make the same mistake he made in 2010 by renouncing the seats he had obtained due to political capriciousness. That would be a serious error for that politician to make, and would represent total disdain for his constituents. We count on our partners to advise him not to tilt further towards the wrong side of history.

I take this opportunity to thank the entire Burundian people, the territorial administration, and the law enforcement and security forces for their joint efforts to ensure the security of voters and voting sites on electional day. I also thank and congratulate the many national, regional and international observers who remained in the hills and neighbourhoods in order to closely follow the elections of 29 June. More than 200 regional and international observers, in addition to those of MENUB, enjoyed national accreditation, as did thousands of national observers. We therefore believe that the accredited electoral observers contributed significantly to strengthening peace and democracy in our country.

We thank the four outgoing chancellors from the Central African Republic, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Uganda and the Republic of Kenya, who, through a political statement, congratulated the Independent National Electoral Commission for having organized and led the first communal and legislative elections in full transparency and with exemplary freedom, and in which all political partners were invited to participate. The statement demonstrated that the Burundian people did indeed want elections and democracy.

In this regard, I would make my usual point underscoring respect for the regional dimension. It is difficult for us to understand the disconnect between the perceptions inside and outside Africa regarding the assessment of the elections in my country. In the future, we shall have to try to reconcile the positions of New York with that of the region. As I said, the report of the regional observers reinforced the role of regional actors and the importance of respect for the regional dimension on the part of those outside the continent.

At the same time, I would be remiss were I not to thank all the countries and international organizations that had the courage to support the national sovereignty and the legitimate right of the Burundian people to democratically choose its own representatives to various instituituions, and to promote the regional dimension here at Headquarters. The representatives of those countries know who they are. I also deeply thank the civil society and religious organizations that courageously supported the elections and acted as observers with true professionalism and neutrality. We especially thank those the observers from the political parties, who braved hunger and exhaustion for the love of their country in order to monitor the elections throughout the cycle, from beginning to end.

We further thank the countries that hosted Burundian refugees during a media and political onslaught that was rife with lies and rumours calling on Burundians to flee their country. We call on those countries to assist Burundi in the repatriation of

those refugees by showing them that peace has been restored and that the reasons for which they fled were not founded. My Government is of course determined to establish conditions conducive to the return of our compatriots who ran away on the basis of those rumours.

We take this opportunity to thank those thousands of Burundian refugees who are returning to the country. They were not mentioned by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, but we believe that approximately 40,000 of them have already returned to the country. The international community is often interested in those who flee countries, but not in those who return. Intellectual honesty requires me to stress the many who have already returned.

Regarding the follow-up to the process and the Emergency Summit of the East African Community (EAC) held on 6 July in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, I should like to inform the Council that we welcomed the conclusions of the Summit. Burundi participated actively at the Summit, during which the region's leaders issued pertinent resolutions to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in Burundi, which we were pleased to welcome as a whole. We also welcome the fact that President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni was named to guide the inter-Burundian dialogue. Similarly, we are very pleased that the East African Community has taken the lead at the highest level, which serves to strengthen coherence and a focus on regional issues in resolving crises and differences in Africa.

The Council is not unaware that the United Nations is well positioned to promote greater coherence among subregional, regional, continental and international aspects in response to the resurgence post-conflict crises. Experience on the ground in Burundi in recent times has proved that greater regional and subregional coherence is a key element is supporting efforts to resolve differences and crises. It continues to be crucial to integrate a regional and subregional perspective in the mediation efforts.

Many countries, including Burundi, prefer to receive assistance and advice from neighbouring countries and regional organizations, which know our country, culture and political history and are better placed to provide quite effective advice to find appropriate solutions to the crisis in Burundi. Under the principles of proximity and subsidiarity, the African Union is called upon to support subregional initiatives and once again cede the leading role to subregional actors in the East African Community in carrying out the dialogue.

I should like to mention that the appointment of a presidential-level mediator and the EAC's leading role in the inter-Burundian dialogue is in line with the operational part of the African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué adopted at its five hundred and fifteenth meeting, wherein the Council calls on the Chair of the African Union Commission immediately to launch consultations for the operationalization of international facilitation under the aegis — and I emphasize this — of the East African Community.

With regard to the postponement of the elections proposed by the Summit, the date of 30 July has been put forward. While the Government welcomes that recommendation, I would like to point out that the provisions of the Constitution of Burundi do not allow a postponement to that date. In line with the Constitution, the country's President must be elected one month prior to the end of the preceding mandate. The term of office of the current President will end on 26 August, which means that the next President must be elected no later than 26 July. In addition, 15 days must be factored in for a second round of voting — that is, between 26 July and 15 August. We are quite willing to accept a week's postponement — say, 21 or 22 July, which would pose no problems pursuant to the Consitution. Burundi is currently discussing this with the leaders of the region, and I think a compromise will in fact be achieved on the exact date for the elections.

Before concluding, let me say that we often talk about the crisis and the political problems; but we must also discuss the economic problems Burundi will face in the coming months. And I would also like to mention the immediate challenges the Government must face in the next few days.

The first challenge is to restore confidence among Burundians. We must continue to undertake extraordinary efforts to bolster national unity. To that end, the inter-Burundian dialogue will have to continue beyond the elections. A week or two is not a long time, and we cannot expect things to be resolved by magic. The Government is fully prepared to do that, which is also in line with the call made by EAC Heads of State.

In addition to national unity and the restoration of trust among Burundians, we must also restore trust between the Government of Burundi and various partner countries that have taken staunch positions on

the Burundi crisis. Given the evolution of events, we should act in line with political reality to restore trust with our partners. The next Government will therefore have to take steps to bring our partners together and regain that lost trust.

We will also face the challenge of proceeding with the disarmament programme. Disarming the civilian population is very important. We have a major disarmament programme in place but, given the electoral context, it must be sped up vis-à-vis all groups. No one group is to be singled out. We are talking about overall disarmament of the civilian population.

We will have to strengthen the private sector in order to generate jobs. We must find alternatives to violence for young people. People with jobs do not turn to violence. Most of the young people one sees in the street are unemployed. We must therefore also have the support of our partners to boost the private sector, create employment and help youth find alternatives to violence.

The foregoing also applies to Burundi's politicians, most of whom expect to hold on to their political posts forever. But not everyone wins elections. We have to start to think about how to find other employment for politicians who lose elections, so that they can find alternatives in the private sector rather than turning to violence after they leave office.

I should like to conclude with a brief comment on something said by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In speaking about disarmament, I thought he singled out a particular group — young people. I emphasize that disarmament is about everyone. With regard to young demonstrators throwing grenades, they were not thrown by youth of the party in power. Those were claimed from Nairobi, and we know who is responsible. But I repeat, disarmament is about everyone. Singling out just one group is counterproductive.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.